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# Letters

## A SCAREDY-CAT SPEAKS OUT

TO THE EDITOR:

I think Irving Kristol is begging the question ("Memoirs of a 'Cold Warrior,'" Feb. 11). His unwillingness ever to seriously entertain the notion that Encounter was subsidized by C.I.A. funds—and his automatic discounting of those rumors because they came from "left-wing" sources—shows just how useful to the C.I.A. he was. Surely the C.I.A. and the autocratic left both clearly understood in those days what Kristol still fails to admit—that the blind

holiness of his crusade made him the perfect "front."

Kristol, Spender and others provided the service for which they were best suited: a harmless alternative for intellectuals. Why should the C.I.A. or any other organization seek to tamper editorially with a perfect product? A perfect but a minor product, I must add.

I expect the C.I.A. considered Kristol's magazine a back-up operation, one of many, no doubt, they had in the works. But, as it turns out, it was rather superfluous. The old left was destroying its own self very nicely, and the national Red-baiting and Red-catching which accompanied my own generation's entry into adulthood left the rest of us, for the most part, a bunch of scaredy-cats unwilling still to think through an issue or take an open stand.

Let the truth be known. I never heard of Encounter in those days, and for years I thought The New Leader was a civil service magazine. But don't you worry, I knew the dangers of Communism all right. It could get you fired from a job.

One more thing, Ignazio Silone was not to be "entrusted" with an anti-Communist task? That's strange of Mr. Kristol. I have heard of Silone. He was one of six contributors, along with Spender, to a slender volume called "The God That Failed" (the God, of course, was Communism), a book I did read in pocket-book reprint, and which I must still have around somewhere, probably in the old liquor carton to which I have consigned similar artifacts of history.

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